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SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

July 1, 2019

Letting Our Light Shine!

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16 NRSV)

Have you ever had the experience of spending multiple, intense days that focuses all your thoughts and energy so that you forget what "normal" life is like? It may have been a vacation, a week at camp, a workcamp, or disaster response experience. That is what I am feeling following the UCC General Synod in Milwaukee. It was wonderful, engaging, and thought-provoking! We were challenged by preachers and speakers; offered the opportunity to March to the local office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement calling for a change in policies that separate immigrant families; invited to participate in service projects; and engaged in countless conversations.

The experience is difficult to explain to those who were not present! I hope you have seen some reflections of our delegates on Facebook and followed the various expressions of events that were shared via UCC social media. Over the next couple of Conference Connections, I am planning to lift up some of the Resolutions passed that call on Conferences and Local Churches to study and consider particular issues.

As some congregations celebrate June 30 as Pride Sunday (recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall uprising) and others emphasize the

importance of July 4th, I am reminded of how important it is for us to be a light that shines. In a recent UCC Still Speaking Devotional by Rev. Kaji Douŝa, she said that “Fear cannot take the lead.” It is not bad to fear, but we cannot let it take the lead over being the light that shines, working faithfully and diligently to bear witness to our faith and the love of God. Whether you are celebrating Pride Sunday or July 4 (or both!), fear was overcome by the commitment for justice in the origin of both celebrations.

Voices matter, actions matter, and our Christian witness matters. May our lives shine so that God’s love for all people shines through us!

Blessings, Char

News from the Conference Office

SEC at General Synod in Milwaukee

If you're on social media (Facebook and Twitter) and "follow" the Southeast Conference you may have noticed that some of our delegates and visitors to General Synod provided us reflections of their time in Milwaukee. In case you missed it, here are their observations:

- Day 1: The ONA Gathering by Ugena Whitlock
- Day 2: Trinity UCC Choir by Carrole Moss
- Day 3: The Resolution Process by Stephanie Milton
- Day 4: Protesting at ICE by Thomas Mitchell
- Day 5: View from the First Time by Kriss Choi

Friends of the Conference

What is the "Friends of the Conference" Fund? Those who attended the Annual Meeting or who are authorized ministers within the Conference may have noticed the flyer/letter about this special fund. This is an opportunity for individuals to directly support the ministry and mission of the Southeast Conference.

You can make a difference so that together we can make a difference!

Contributions can be made online through the Conference website at www.secucc.org or by sending a check payable to the Southeast Conference, P.O. Box 1950, Decatur, GA 30031, indicating that it is for the "Friends of the Conference" Fund.

From the Generosity Coordinator

We are back from General Synod 32 which was held in Milwaukee, WI and all is well. We are tired in the body, but well in the spirit. The spirit of the Lord was truly with us as we worshipped together, attended workshops, were in fellowship with old friends, made new friends, exchanged ideas, we prayed and we wept. Despite the cold rainy days, we made it through and arrived back home refreshed and re-energized.

On July 1, 2019, the United Church of Christ will launch a new initiative: "The Just World Fund." The United Church Funds is answering the call for transformative economies by creating a fixed income fund that offers access to solution based investments and operates on the principle that global and domestic development is an investable asset.

This fund will hold as its moral center the Three Great Loves of the UCC as expressed by its outreach efforts and the resolutions of General Synod.

Please continue to invite me to your church as we continue to work together to make this a JUST WORLD FOR ALL.

Blessings, as we journey, TOGETHER,
Min. Carrole

Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2019. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

Week of July 1

- Evergreen Congregational UCC; Beachton, Georgia
- Leslie Brogan
- Sam Greening
- John Pearson
- Merianna Neely

Week of July 8

- Brookemeade Congregational UCC; Nashville, Tennessee
- Patricia Hough
- Shannon Michael Pater
- David Templeton Jr

Churches in Transition

Central Congregational, Atlanta, GA; United Church of Huntsville, Huntsville AL; First Congregational, Birmingham AL; Pilgrimage, Marietta GA; First Congregational Christian, Montgomery AL; First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL

News from the Wider Church

Back Bay Mission Earns Gold Seal of Transparency

Back Bay Mission just earned a 2019 Gold Seal of Transparency by adding information to their Nonprofit Profile on GuideStar. Now their community members, as well as 10+ million GuideStar users, can find in-depth information about their goals, strategies, capabilities, and progress. BBM is shining a spotlight on the difference they help make on the MS Gulf Coast. Plus, they have provided fresh information to 200+ charitable websites and applications that use GuideStar data, such as AmazonSmile, Facebook, and Network for Good. Check out their profile here.

KYP: The UCC Weekly Email

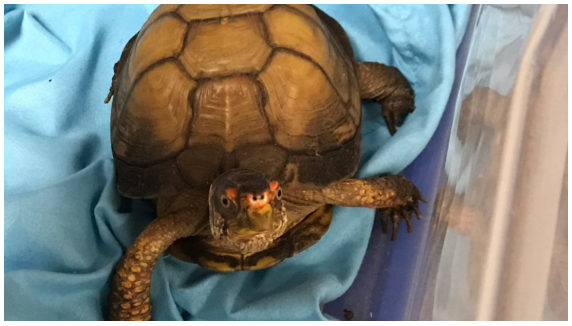
Interested in keeping up to date with news about the United Church of

Christ? Be sure to subscribe to the weekly "Keeping You Posted" coordinated e-zine of news, featured items, resources, worship materials, and justice-action items e-mailed each Tuesday. Learn more on the UCC website.

News from our Local Congregations

Women's Ecumenical Luncheon at Fairfield Glade

Fairfield Glade Community Church hosted a Women's Ecumenical Luncheon on June 12. Women from four other churches in Fairfield Glade attended. The Keynote Speaker was Bri Payne, Executive Director of the John Knox Center in Tennessee. The title of her presentation was "All God's Creatures Have Value." Bri brought two of her four-legged friends: an opossum named Shine and a turtle named Buttercup. Bri provided environmental education about the value, dignity, and respect of all of God's creatures.



Visiting our Thomasville, GA Churches

by Min. Carrole Moss

Evergreen Congregational UCC in their combined fifth Sunday worship service. Rev. James Banks delivered a soul-stirring sermon entitled "PRIDE

AND PREJUDICE.' The call was to offer us a mantle of love and power, to lay before God our troubles, our longings, and our hopes through difficulty, struggles and loss into the spirit realm of joy and peace. Read more and view photos on our website.

Training and Learning Opportunities

2019 UCC Southern Region Women's Retreat

UCC Sisters and Friends are invited to come and join us at this year's Southern Region Women's Retreat. This event includes the United Church of Christ Conferences: Southern, Florida, Southeast and South Central. Meet us in the mountains at Blowing Rock Conference Center (BRCC) in Blowing Rock, North Carolina for this year's retreat.

UCC Southern Region
WOMEN'S RETREAT
Strong Sisters' Stories

The theme for the weekend is "Strong Sisters' Stories." This fun and meaningful gathering is taking place October 18-20, 2019 (Friday, Saturday & Sunday). This will be a time of fellowship, relaxation and renewal for all of us. During our time together we will experience Strong Sisters' Stories brought to life through Story Sessions, Worship, Missions, Prayer, Free-time, Fun-time and more.

Registration is NOW OPEN – Fill out your Registration Form and send it to the Registrar before the deadline (*early bird deadline is August 30*). (Note: You only need to send back pages 2 and 3 of the 3-page Registration packet).

Contact Us

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